

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 14943 131435Z

43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

AID-05 SAM-01 SAB-01 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /064 W

----- 053769

O P 131304Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1831

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

US MISSION USUN NY PRIORITY 2796

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 14943

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PMIL LE IS

SUBJECT: FURTHER DETAILS RE ISRAELI AIR RAID ON BEIRUT

REFS: A. BEIRUT 14871 (NOTAL); B. USDAO TEL AVIV 2579 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: CASUALTIES INCURRED IN DEC 12 ISRAELI AIR RAID WERE REMARKABLY LIGHT, SOMETHING WHICH WE ATTRIBUTE AS MUCH TO LUCK AS TO PROFESSIONAL ABILITIES OF ISRAELI AIR FORCE. WE ESTIMATE THAT THIS LATEST ATTACK, FAR FROM DAMPENING FEDAYEEN ENTHUSIASM FOR TERROR OPERATIONS AGAINST ISRAEL, WILL SHET THEIR APPETITE FOR WHAT THEY LIKE TO CALL "ARMED STRUGGLE" STILL FURTHER. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO BEST INFO AVAILABLE TO US, ISRAELI AIR STRIKE DEC 12 ON BEIRUT'S SABRA/SHATILA QUARTER LEFT ONE 65-YEAR OLD WOMAN DEAD (REPORTEDLY OF HEART FAILURE) AND AT LEAST TEN PERSONS WOUNDED (INCLUDING FIVE SA'IQA FEDAYEEN). ALL CASUALTIES
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 14943 131435Z

APPARENTLY WERE PALESTINIANS.

2. WITHIN HOURS OF ISRAELI AIR STRIKE, PRIMIN SHOLH INFORMED PARLIAMENT OF GOL'S INTENTION TO SUBMIT COMPLAINT TO UNSC. (AS REPORTED SEPTTEL, GOL HAS SINCE DECIDED NOT RPT NOT TO CALL FOR SC MEETING. ARAB AMBASSADORS IN BEIRUT ARE MEETING AT MFA AT 1300 LOCAL TODAY, BUT NO MOVE HAS BEEN MADE BY GOL TO CONVOKE AMBASSADORS OF FIVE GOVTS PERMANENTLY REPRESENTED ON SC -- A DEVELOPMENT WHICH USUALLY PRECEDES GOL REQUESTS FOR SC MEETINGS IN WAKE OF ISRAELI ATTACKS.)

3. EGYPTIAN EMBOFF INFORMED US EVENING DEC 12 THAT IAF STRIKE DIRECTED AGAINST OFFICES AND TRAINING AREA BELONGING TO SYRIAN-SPONSORED SA'IQA. LEBANESE ARMY CONFIRMS DESTRUCTION OF SA'IQA INSTALLATION IN AREA ADJACENT TO NE CORNER OF SHATILA REFUGEE CAMP, AND LOCAL PRESS ALSO NOTES PRESENCE 100 METERS AWAY OF OFFICE BELONGING TO PFLP, WHICH HAS CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEC 11 ATTACK IN TEL AVIV CINEMA (SEPTTEL).

4. LEBANESE ARMY CLAIMS ATTACKING AIRCRAFT EMPLOYED ROCKETS AND IRON BOMBS, SOME OF WHICH FAILED TO EXPLODE, AS WELL AS CBU'S AND MACHINE-GUN FIRE. LOUDSPEAKERS WITHIN SABRA AREA WERE HEARD SHORTLY AFTER ATTACK INFORMING INHABITANTS THAT DELAYED-ACTION DEVICES WERE BEING DISARMED, BUT WE UNABLE CONFIRM THAT SUCH PROJECTILES WERE USED. GOL CLAIMS LAF AIRCRAFT WERE SCRAMBLED AND THAT LEBANESE AND FEDAYEEN AA BATTERIES WERE ALSO IN ACTION. SEVERAL WITNESSES REPORT SEEING SAM-7 MISSILES FIRED BY FEDAYEEN. ALTHOUGH NO HITS OBSERVED ON ATTACKING AIRCRAFT, WE HAVE RELIABLE REPORTS OF LARGE EXPLOSIONS AND HUGH COLUMN OF WATER AT SEE OFF BEIRUT, SIDON AND AN NAQURA ALONG TRACK OF DEPARTING ISRAELI AIRCRAFT. PRESS ATTRIBUTES AT LEAST ONE OF THESE EXPLOSIONS TO CRASH OF AN AIRCRAFT DAMAGED BY AA FIRE (PLO, PREDICTABLY, CLAIMS EVEN HEAVIER IAF LOSSES). WHILE IT MORE LIKELY THAT EXPLOSIONS WERE UNEXPENDED ORDNANCE BEING JETTISONED FROM DEPARTING AIRCRAFT, LEBANESE ARMY REPORTS ISRAELI HELICOPTERS WITH SEARCHLIGHTS WERE CIRCULATING DURING NIGHT OVER SITE OF ONE EXPLOSION OFF SIDON.

5. ARMY ALSO REPORTS ISRAELI SHELLING ON BORDER CONTINUED DEC 12-13, TOTALLING OVER 110 ROUNDS. MUCH OF THIS APPARENTLY WAS IN RETALIATION FOR EARLIER REPORTED FEDAYEEN ROCKET ATTACK
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 14943 131435Z

AGAINST ISRAELI TOWN OF SAFAD. IDF TARGETS INCLUDED DISTRICT CENTER AT NABATIYEH, WHERE ACCORDING TO EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS SOME 15 ROUNDS FELL IN MIDDLE OF TOWN AT APPROXIMATELY 0030 LOCAL DEC 13, WOUNDING THREE LEBANESE AND ONE PALESTINIAN.

6. BEIRUT ATMOSPHERE REMAINS SOMEWHAT DISTURBED DEC 13 BUT WE HAVE HAD NO REPORTS OF INCIDENTS INVOLVING AMCITS. TRAFFIC WAS LIGHT LAST EVENING AS MOST RESIDENTS, INCLUDING EMBASSY

STAFF UNDER INSTRUCTIONS, CHOSE TO STAY CLOSE TO THEIR HOMES. GOL AND FEDAYEEN SET UP NUMBER OF CHECKPOINTS FOLLOWING INCIDENT, SOME OF WHICH HAD BEEN DISMANTLED BY MIDNIGHT. FEDAYEEN, HOWEVER, REMAIN ON HIGH STATE OF ALERT WITH FIXED POSITIONS AND MOBILE PATROLS IN AND AROUND BEIRUT REFUGEE CAMPS.

17. COMMENT: RE IDF BRIEFING REPORTED REFTEL B, SHOULD BE NOTED THAT GENERAL AREA OF AIR STRIKE IS AMONG MOST DENSELY-POPULATED IN TOWN AND THAT REFUGEE CAMP AND OTHER INHABITED AREAS ADJACENT TO TARGET FORM VERITABLE RABBIT-WARREN OF HUTS, SHANTIES AND SMALL BUILDINGS. WHILE WE DO NOT QUESTION CAPABILITIES OF ISRAELI PILOTS, FACT THAT SIGNIFICANTLY LARGER NUMBER OF CIVILIAN CASUALTIES DID NOT RESULT FROM DEC 12 AIR STRIKE IS REMARKABLE. THIS PARTICULARLY TRUE SINCE ATTACK OCCURED AT TIME WHEN CHILDREN RETURNING HOME FROM SCHOOL AND WHEN, HAD WEATHER BEEN BETTER, NUMBER OF PERSONS-- INCLUDING AMERICANS-- WOULD HAVE BEEN FREQUENTING NEARBY RIDING CLUBS. WE THEREFORE REITERATE THAT SUCH AIR STRIKES IN BEIRUT AREA, REGARDLESS OF INTENDED TARGETS, CARRY VERY HIGH RISKS BOTH TO LOCAL CIVILIAN POPULATION AND ALSO AMERICAN COMMUNITY, WITH BOTH EXPOSED TO ACCIDENTAL INJURY AND LATTER ALSO VULNERABLE TO SUBSEQUENT ADVERSE REACTION AS STATED REFTEL A. SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES THIS RAID SOMEWHAT MITIGATED BY LOW LEVEL OF CASUALTIES.

8. IN ADDITION, THIS LATEST IAF RAID IS LIKELY TO RENEW AGITATION AMONG MORE RADICAL AND ARAB NATIONALISTS FOR ARAB MILITARY SUPPORT, INCLUDING TROOPS, MISSILES AND AIRCRAFT, OF LEBANON. GOL, WHICH SUCCESSFULLY LAID THIS ISSUE TO REST AT LAST SUMMER'S ARAB DEFENSE COUNCIL MEETINGS IN CAIRO MAY WELL BE HARDER PRESSED TO DEAL WITH IT AGAIN.

9. FINALLY, AS WE HAVE NOTED SO OFTEN IN PAST, INTENSIFICATION
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 14943 131435Z

OF ISRAELI ACTIONS AGAINST FEDAYEEN IN LEBANON IS LIKELY ENCOURAGE THEM TO INCREASE THEIR TERRORIST PROVOCATIONS STILL FURTHER. WITH POSSIBILITIES FOR ISRAELI-PLO "DIALOGUE" STEADILY BECOMING MORE FROZEN THAN EVER, WITH ALL FEDAYEEN FACTIONS VYING INCREASINGLY WITH ONE ANTOHER TO GRAB HEADLINES IN "ARMED STRUGGLE" AGAINST THEIR ENEMY, AND WITH GOL LESS CAPABLE THAN EVER OF EXERTING ANY POSITIVE EFFECT ON THIS DETERIORATING STATE OF AFFAIRS, WE FORESEE ONLY GROWING CHAOS AND MAYHEM CHARACTERIZING LEBANESE-ISRAELI RELATIONS IN DAYS IMMEDIATELY AHEAD.
HOUGHTON

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BOMBING, AIR COMBAT OPERATIONS, TERRORISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BEIRUT14943
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740362-0844
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741238/aaaabgig.tel
Line Count: 165
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 74 BEIRUT 14871, 74 (NOTA USDAO TEL AVIV 2579
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 JUL 2002 by rowelle0>; APPROVED <27 MAR 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FURTHER DETAILS RE ISRAELI AIR RAID ON BEIRUT
TAGS: MPOL, LE, IS
To: STATE DOD
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005